



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

October 26, 2021

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra,

Thank you for your leadership as we continue to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. We have learned that San Diego County wanted to share soon-to-expire, unused COVID-19 vaccine doses with its corresponding public health authorities in Baja California. However, the County was told by the White House Vaccine Task Force that it was not possible, reportedly because these donations must be run by the federal government.

As you know, COVID-19 vaccines have a six-month shelf life, then they must be thrown out. We should make the best use of all doses by providing them to people across the border who need and want them before they expire. According to the California Department of Public Health, “roughly 0.6 percent of the nearly 5.2 million doses delivered to the region have been wasted”¹ and “about 4.7 percent of the more than 493 million of coronavirus vaccine doses delivered across the U.S. have been wasted.”² While the federal government charts a more universal solution to utilizing expiring vaccines, we believe there should be immediate flexibility to allow San Diego to share unused COVID-19 vaccine with Mexico and we request a briefing on what the barriers are to taking this step to improve public health in our region.

Please feel free to contact either one of us with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Peters".

Scott Peters
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Juan Vargas".

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

¹ <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/health/story/2021-10-22/covid>

² *ibid*